



PROPHETIC TIMES

WEEKLY WORLD NEWS UPDATE

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 22 2008

IAEA: SYRIAN SITE COULD HAVE BEEN NUCLEAR REACTOR

November 19, 2008 The AP reported: "The U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said (Wed) that a Syrian site bombed by Israel in 2007 had the characteristics of a nuclear reactor. It also admitted that its investigation into Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program is deadlocked.

The conclusions were contained in two confidential reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency that were obtained by the AP."... The report on Iran— which also went to the U.N. Security Council— cautioned that Tehran's stonewalling meant the IAEA could not "provide credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities." And it noted that the Islamic Republic continued to expand uranium enrichment, an activity that can make both nuclear fuel or fissile warhead material.

While that conclusion was expected, it was a formal confirmation of Iran's refusal to heed Security Council demands to freeze such activities, despite three sets of sanctions meant to force an enrichment stop. Iran denies weapons ambitions, and Syria asserts the site hit more than a year ago by Israeli warplanes had no nuclear functions. But the two reports did little to dispel suspicions about either country.

On Syria, the agency also said that soil samples taken from the bombed site had a "significant number" of chemically processed natural uranium particles."..."

ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNEARTH HEROD FAMILY TOMBS

November 19, 2008 Reuters reported: "An Israeli archaeologist said on Wednesday he had unearthed what he believed were the 2,000-year-old remains of two tombs which had held a wife and daughter-in-law of the biblical King Herod. Other findings announced by Ehud Netzer of Jerusalem's Hebrew University provided new evidence of the lavish lifestyle of the Roman-era monarch also known as the "King of the Jews".

Herod, a Roman-anointed king who ruled Judea from 37 BC until his death in 4 BC, has a special place in biblical history. Herod rebuilt the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, making him a focus of study in the Jewish state. The Gospel of Matthew says Herod ordered the "Massacre of the Innocents", the killing of male infants in Jesus' birthplace of Bethlehem, out of fear of losing his throne.

Netzer, an authority on Herodian excavations, showed reporters portions of two limestone sarcophagi he says had contained remains of one of Herod's wives, Malthace, and a daughter-in-law. He said these findings supported his claims that another sarcophagus he found at the site in 2007 had been Herod's tomb. Some experts had said then the evidence seemed inconclusive.

Based on the additional sarcophagi he has found, and despite the absence of any inscriptions or documentation by the ancient Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, Netzer said: "I would eat my hat if it were someone else's tomb."

At a visit to the dig site in Herodium, outside Jerusalem in the occupied West Bank, where one of Herod's palaces once stood, Netzer showed reporters evidence of what he said was a mausoleum at the site, where the remains of the sarcophagi had been found.

Some bones were also found nearby but Netzer could not verify they belonged to any of the Herod dynasty. Netzer said the remains of the monarch and his relatives likely disappeared when their tombs were smashed, possibly by Jewish rebels against the Romans from 66-72 AD.

He said his team was surprised when they came across further evidence of Herod's cushy lifestyle, a well-preserved mural of gazelles decorating walls of what Netzer believes was luxury seating for a theater."

BRITAIN GRAPPLES WITH ROLE FOR ISLAMIC JUSTICE

November 19, 2008 International Herald Tribune reported: "The woman in black wanted an Islamic divorce. She told the religious judge that her husband hit her, cursed her and wanted her dead. But her husband was opposed, and the Islamic scholar adjudicating the case seemed determined to keep the couple together. So, sensing defeat, she brought out her secret weapon: her father.

In walked a bearded man in long robes who described his son-in-law as a hot-tempered man who had duped his daughter, evaded the police and humiliated his family. The judge promptly reversed himself and recommended divorce. This is Islamic justice, British style. Despite a raucous national debate over the limits of religious tolerance and the pre-eminence of British law, the tenets of Shariah, or Islamic law, are increasingly being applied to everyday life in cities across the country.



The Church of England has its own ecclesiastical courts. British Jews have had their own "beth din" courts for more than a century."...Boxed between the two, the government has taken a stance both cautious and confusing, a sign of how volatile almost any discussion of the role of Britain's nearly two million Muslims can become.

"There is nothing whatever in English law that prevents people abiding by Shariah principles if they wish to, provided they do not come into conflict with English law," the justice minister, Jack Straw, said last month."..."

Conservatives and liberals alike — many of them unaware that the Islamic courts had been functioning at all, much less for years — have repeatedly denounced the courts as poor substitutes for British jurisprudence. They argue that the Islamic tribunals' proceedings are secretive, with no accountability and no standards for judges' training or decisions.

Critics also point to cases of domestic violence in which Islamic scholars have tried to keep marriages together by ordering husbands to take classes in anger management, leaving the wives so intimidated that they have withdrawn their complaints from the police.”...

But as the uproar continues, the popularity of the courts among Muslims has blossomed. Some of the informal councils, as the courts are known, have been giving advice and handing down judgments to Muslims for more than two decades. Yet the councils have expanded significantly in number and prominence in recent years, with some Islamic scholars reporting a 50 percent increase in cases since 2005.”...

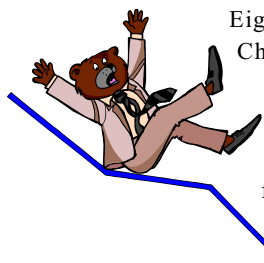
CALIF. SUPREME COURT TO TAKE UP GAY MARRIAGE BAN

November 19, 2008 The Associated Press reported: “California's highest court agreed Wednesday to hear several legal challenges to the state's new ban on same-sex marriage but refused to allow gay couples to resume marrying before it rules. The California Supreme Court accepted three lawsuits seeking to nullify Proposition 8, a voter-approved constitutional amendment that overruled the court's decision in May that legalized gay marriage.

All three cases claim the measure abridges the civil rights of a vulnerable minority group. They argue that voters alone did not have the authority to enact such a significant constitutional change.”...Gay rights groups and local governments petitioning to overturn the ban were joined by the measure's sponsors and Attorney General Jerry Brown in urging the Supreme Court to consider whether Proposition 8 passes legal muster.”...

FINANCIALS NEED AT LEAST \$1 TRILLION: ANALYST

November 20, 2008 Reuters reported: “The U.S. financial system still needs at least \$1 trillion to \$1.2 trillion of tangible common equity to restore confidence and improve liquidity in the credit markets, Friedman Billings Ramsey analyst Paul Miller said.



Eight financial companies -- Citigroup Inc, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Wells Fargo & Co, JPMorgan Chase & Co, American International Group Inc, Bank of America Corp and GE Financial -- are in greatest need of capital, he said.

"Debt or TARP capital is not true capital. Long-term debt financing is not the solution. Only injections of true tangible common equity will solve the current crisis," he said in a note dated November 19. Currently, the U.S. financial system has \$37 trillion of debt outstanding, he noted.

Combined, these eight companies have roughly \$12.2 trillion of assets and only \$406 billion of tangible common capital, or just 3.4 percent...Miller said these institutions need somewhere between \$1 trillion and \$1.2trillion of capital to put their balance sheets back on solid ground and begin to extend credit again, given their dependence on short-term funding and the illiquid nature of their asset bases.”...

GLOBAL WARMING PREDICTIONS ARE OVERESTIMATED, SUGGESTS STUDY ON BLACK CARBON

November 18, 2008 CornellOnline reported: “A detailed analysis of black carbon -- the residue of burned organic matter -- in computer climate models suggests that those models may be overestimating global warming predictions. A new Cornell study, published online in Nature Geosciences, quantified the amount of black carbon in Australian soils and found that there was far more than expected, said Johannes Lehmann, the paper's lead author and a Cornell professor of biogeochemistry. The survey was the largest of black carbon ever published.

As a result of global warming, soils are expected to release more carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere, which, in turn, creates more warming. Climate models try to incorporate these increases of carbon dioxide from soils as the planet warms, but results vary greatly when realistic estimates of black carbon in soils are included in the predictions, the study found.

Soils include many forms of carbon, including organic carbon from leaf litter and vegetation and black carbon from the burning of organic matter. It takes a few years for organic carbon to decompose, as microbes eat it and convert it to carbon dioxide. But black carbon can take 1,000-2,000 years, on average, to convert to carbon dioxide.

By entering realistic estimates of stocks of black carbon in soil from two Australian savannas into a computer model that calculates carbon dioxide release from soil, the researchers found that carbon dioxide emissions from soils were reduced by about 20 percent over 100 years, as compared with simulations that did not take black carbon's long shelf life into account.

The findings are significant because soils are by far the world's largest source of carbon dioxide, producing 10 times more carbon dioxide each year than all the carbon dioxide emissions from human activities combined. Small changes in how carbon emissions from soils are estimated, therefore, can have a large impact.

"We know from measurements that climate change today is worse than people have predicted," said Lehmann. "But this particular aspect, black carbon's stability in soil, if incorporated in climate models, would actually decrease climate predictions.”...